

# The Mixumaxu Gazette

#142 22 November 1975

A MIXUMAXU GAZETTE Call me Robert Bryan Lipton of Box 1962, Lafayette College, Easton, Pa. 18042. Some years ago—2 and a third to be exact—having some money in my pocket and nothing much to interest me in mundac, I thought I would publish a little zine of Diplomacy called the Mixumaxu Gazette, costing 10¢/issue plus postage, with game openings for \$1 plus a sub, \$2 for traders. It is a way I have of drying up my sense of humor. Whenever I found myself grinding at the mouth; whenever it is a bright April 1 in my soul; whenever I find myself pausing before banana skins which lay on the sidewalk and kicking the rear of every fat man I meet; and especially when my sense of humor gets such an upper hand of me, that it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately making a snowball and knocking peoples' tophats off; whenever three weeks have passed since the last issue—then I account it high time to turn out an issue full of postal Diplomacy and whatnot. This is my substitute for slapstick and sight gags. With a philosophical flourish.. Russel Baker turns out a column for the TIMES; I quietly take out my mimeograph. There is nothing surprising in this. If they but knew it, almost all fen in their degree, some time or other, cherish very nearly the same feelings towards fanac with me.

How do you like it? It's the opening paragraph in a novel I'm writing, called Mixu Max or the Great White Zine.

Those of you who have suffered with me from the beginning know that every Christmastime I skip moves for an issue. Well, this time I'm going to skip an issue. I have just spent two weeks getting the ball rolling on reviving the SLOBINPOLIT ZHURNAL and I am exhausted, what with typing up three pages of John Carroll's press. It makes me seem humorless, and so the next issue will appear on 3 January 1976. Moves will be due the day before. Ed Hollishwandner will be running 1975 AY by carbon copy for one turn (assuming the Canadian postal strike is over by then), which will appear in the next issue, along with the regular moves. His address will be 827 Media Street, Bethlehem, Pa. 18017, tel. 215-867-5516. By the by, my address, from middle December to middle January will be 556 Green Place, Woodmere, N.Y. 11598, tel. 516-374-4723.

If you're interested in seeing the revived Slobinpolit Zhurnal, send me 50¢. I'll send you a copy of the rules, the map, and Ray Heuer will send you a copy when he publishes the first full issue three weeks after the end of the Canadian Postal Strike. (70% pay raise they want. Jesus.) Other things available from here are:

THE MIXUMAXU GAZETTE: ##3-7, 9-12, 14, 18-20, 22-26, 28-35, 37-41. 25¢@, 5/\$1.

THE PUBLISHER: 75¢

NOVARIA #1: 10¢.

DAS EDELWEISS SUN-JOURNAL-PRESS: ##1, 2. 20¢@

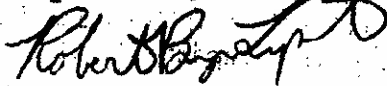
VAUDEVILLE LINES ##1-10: 20¢@, 10/\$1.50

IRVING ##2-6. 20¢@.

Or a copy of everything for \$5.

No space down here, so look to the right where I'll say

Abyssinia,



Robert Bryan Lipton

## THE EMPIRE: HISTORY AS IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN

by John Boardman

"It is earth's most famous town, so it belongs to everybody, and to all times at once." - Christopher Morley, The Trojan Horse

"...The Middle Ages not as they were, but as they should have been."  
-The Society for Creative Anachronism

Many people find modern interpretations of history esthetically unpleasant. The late T.H. White in The Once and Future King refuses to see King Arthur as "a distressed Briton hopping about in a suit of woad in the fifth century." It is somehow small-souled to view the Trojan War as a conflict over control of the Black Sea grain trade, rather than the rescue of a distressed(?) princess. Shakespeare's Richard III and Eisenstein's Ivan IV have almost shoved the historical monarchs of those names out of the pages of history, though the blackened reputation of the former and the whitened reputation of the latter are now getting put into proper perspective.

One person who has decided to strike a blow for the romance of history is Jean d'Ormesson, youngest member of the Académie Française. He has not merely rearranged the history of a known country, as White did with Arthur's Britain. In order to present his ideas on history and historiography, he has created an Empire to illustrate them. And he has constructed a magnificently credible bibliography, easily the best part of his book, The Glory of the Empire (Knopf, 1974).

D'Ormesson's Empire is hard to locate geographically, although a map is included. The provenance of the map, which shows the Empire's major cities, is doubtful. It is in the style of many maps Rafael Palacios has drawn for various historical works, but it bears the same initials as those of the book's translator into English, Barbara Bray. The Empire (it is given no other name, and its principal city is simply The City) is located somewhere east of Rome and west of China. It faces to the sea on the west, and engages in commerce and war with such realms as Cyprus, Sicily and 'Pomposa', a merchant republic strongly resembling medieval Venice. The Empire's greatest foes are Mongol-type horse nomads, but there is little mention of dealings with Persia or India. There are forests in the north ("The whole aspect of this area has been altered by the recent construction of a hydroelectric dam at Novokardkalinsk") and the "Khanate of the Oighurs" to the east.

D'Ormesson frequently cites plays, novels and operas which take as their themes various dramatic events from the Empire's history. There is a long passage from Corneille's Arsaphes and Heloise (translated into English by Dryden!), a mention of Marlowe's Alexis the Great (including a performance with Laurence Olivier in the title role), and a love poem by Emperor Alexis, translated by Robert Graves. The lives of the greatest emperors seem to have inspired every kind of artistic work, from children's counting rhymes to pornography.

Apparently history has nothing to do except provide plots for Marlowe and Corneille. The great events of the Empire's history, as perceived by d'Ormesson, concern rivalries between royal brothers, broken love affairs, family jealousies, magnificent treason, renunciations, reconciliations and glimmering Golden Ages viewed lovingly through the mists of time. The whole early history of the Empire is made a prologue to the triumphant reign of Alexis the Great, who is at once a Caesar, a Christ and a Charlemagne. When, early in his reign, an enormous horde of loot-hungry barbarians descend from the east, the whole affair is settled by a double combat in which, true to the best traditions of romance, two seasoned warriors are slain by a boy and a blind old man. The Khakhan of the barbarians at once swears allegiance to Alexis, and thereafter serves as his faithful sword-arm in conquering an empire that extends from Brittany to Korea.

\* There is a Pomposa in Italy on the Adriatic coast, midway between Venice and Ravenna. — RBL

The Empire has a largely Grecian flavor, and major figures in its history are most likely to bear names like Basil, Thaumias, Simeon, Philocrates, Helen and Alexis. (There are also Latin names and several French and Germanic ones) We are nowhere told what the languages or religion of the Empire was, though conflicts between the Emperor and the priests are a major theme of its history. The educated classes speak Greek and the founders of the two principal schools of philosophy are "Hermenides" and "Paracletus"! This multivalence extends to geography. After The City the principal cities are its great rival Onessa, the religious center Aquileus, the Greek-sounding Amphibolus and Evcharisto and the Italianate Mezzopotamo.

● Prior to Alexis the Empire's history shows a clock-like alternation between periods of order under strong rulers and of anarchy under weak ones. This presumably is all that d'Ormesson perceives from a 'scientific' treatment of history. Both sorts of rule give ample opportunity for dramatic themes. We hear very little about trade routes, class structure, natural resources and their exploitation or the rest of the raw material of real history. If no real empire is capable of serving its proper role as an inspiration for fiction, then by the Sun, the Oak and the Eagle, d'Ormesson has created one that will!

Alexis, whose career occupies the last three-fourths of the book, runs through all the stock commonplaces of myth. Mystery and tragedy attach to his begetting and birth. A happy childhood is sundered in a trice, whereupon he travels to an Alexandria bearing little resemblance to the Egyptian city of that name and goes through an appropriately riotous youth. After this ends in surfeit and heartbreak there is a season of sainthood and isolation in the wilderness, followed by his return to the Empire to take up his heritage. Once Emperor, Alexis is surrounded by the greatest administrative, philosophical and esthetic minds of his age, and inaugurates a Golden Age. His chosen bride is a retired sacred prostitute named Theodora; this not only recalls the retired whore of that name who married Rome's Justinianus I, but also the Jewish tradition that the bride of the Messiah will be a prostitute. (This tradition originated with Hosea, who compared marital with religious infidelity, and was enthusiastically accepted by the false Messiah Jakob Frank in the 18th century.) His great alliance with the barbarians is made an expression of human brotherhood and he is made regretful but determined about the forcible suppression of the alliance's opponents among both citizens of the Empire and members of the hordes.

D'Ormesson makes a common error of amateur historians in regarding barbarians as a sort of homogenous, indiscriminate disorderly mass. In real life, civilized folk are innovative and indiscriminate; barbarians are ruled by rigid customs. "The barbarians, as was their wont, formed a shapeless mass spreading out to the horizon," he writes. In actuality, a regiment of any civilized state will take any position in the line it is ordered to, and if it is told to stay out of the fighting, or to retreat to draw the enemy out of position, it will do so with no second thoughts. But a barbarian battle line must contain the right tribes in the right order, or else the Khakhan or Ardrigh or whatever has a civil war on his hands.

At the close of his reign, following the conquest and sack of Rome and the appropriately tragic death of his only son, Alexis resigns the throne and goes into retirement as Tsar Aleksandr I is supposed to have done. His final farewell to his closest friend, the chronicler Justin Dion\*, is supposed to sound like King Arthur's withdrawal to Avalon "deep in a splendid dream until the universal Empire returns", but it sounds more like Christopher Robin's farewell to his toys in The House at Pooh Corner. A brief paragraph mentions, with obvious reluctance, the subsequent fall of "The Holy Altaic Roman Empire" under Alexis' successors, "of whom the last, Constantine, was to die at dawn one morning towards the end of the summer of 1925, dead drunk, marvellously made up, with a bullet through his head... among the moth-eaten palms of Monte Carlo".

\* Who, no doubt, wrote a book entitled Anekdotia. — RBL



THE TUNE IS THE SAME AS LAST ISSUE BUT IS THE COUNTERPOINT TOTALLY UNCHANGED?

I received the other day my trade copy of Peter Birks' GREATEST HITS #15. In it he discusses the NGC's (Nation Games Club), or at least his opinions on the independent sector. A bit of briefing is necessary: In Britain, Diplomacy sets are sold with a flyer telling the buyer he can play by mail through the NGC for £ 1.10 and a sub to an NGCzine. He does not find out about independent zines, usually, until he's been in the hobby a while. His opinions are on pp. 6-7 of the issue and are in response to a letter from Peter Swanson. I shall quote Birks out of context, probably destroying his meaning. I hope he'll have pity on this benighted Yank.

"The trouble with our 'high prices' is that they are not high at all. What we try to ensure is that our publishers don't lose too much money on the deal. This makes them less likely to fold. In your question about us being afraid of undercutting by independents, the answer is yes, we are afraid of some pimply little fourteen year old starting a zine with 25p (55¢) game fees and a price of 2p(5¢)+postage per issue, published once every two weeks. We are afraid because we know he will fold around issue 12, and that the poor subbers will be out on their ear. The trouble is, most people don't realize what is going to happen when people like this appear, because they haven't been in the hobby long enough to have seen it all happen before. The NGC charges £1 (about \$2.20) for a game which lasts over a year, which the player can be pretty certain will finish in the same zine, and can be absolutely certain will finish somewhere."

I should note that I have interposed the American price equivalents.

Now, I wish to ask the reader to consider the following cases:

- 1: This zine is started by a college professor who spends his spare time convincing people he is crazy. It charges no subscriptions or gamefees. The publisher has just gotten married. His reason for publishing is that his wife refuses to play Diplomacy with him.
- 2: This zine is started by a fifteen-year-old high school student, who takes on any job he is asked to.
- 3: This zine is started by a college dropout working as a short order cook. He also publishes a Naval wargame zine on a spirit duplicator which doesn't work too well. His typing and grammar are atrocious.
- 4: This zine is started by a Benedictine Priest, aided by the staff of his abbey. It is beautifully printed with plenty of artwork and there is advertisement galore to pay for any deficit left over by high gamefees and subs.
- 5: This zine is started by a college student in the middle of summer while home on vacation. He does not have a duplicater. His typing is poor.

#1 is John Boardman, who has been producing GRAUSTARK for 12½ years. The second is Scott Rosenberg who has been producing THE POCKET ARMENIAN for a year and a half; the third is Herb Barents who has been producing BOAST for four years. The 4th is the Rev. Daniel Gorham whose THE FIGHTER'S HOME started in the spring of 1974, continued to the Summer, then dropped out of sight, to re-appear for two issues in the spring of 1975 then drop again. The fifth is me.

The hobby is full of cases like this. Zines with months spent planning out everything before an issue appears go under; zines turned out on the spur of the moment are as dependable as the sun's rising. There is no standard for telling who is reliable for publishing purposes, except for experience, and even that will sometimes err disastrously.

Getting back to Peter Birks: In his letter, Swanson says a couple of times that NGC often duplicates services or has services totally unavailable to non-NGC members. To which Birks replies:

"You mention the phrase 'duplication of effort' twice in your letter, both times with an unfavorable slant. And yet you seem hell-bent on maintaining an



THE DIPLOMACY ASSOCIATION PRESENTS

A RATING SURVEY 6

<u>Averaged</u> <u>Score</u>	<u>The Top Twenty</u>	<u>Games</u> <u>Won</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Games</u> <u>Rated</u>
833	Walter Buchanan	7	7.500	9
759	Mike Rocamora	6	6.833	9
708	John Beshara	9	9.200	13
628	Tom Eller	7	7.533	12
561	Doug Beyerlein	11	12.900	23
555	Monte Zelazny	5	5.000	9
542	Randy Bytwerk	6	6.500	12
497	Andrew Phillips	10	12.917	26
494	Lewis Pulsipher	6	7.900	16
482	Tim Tilson	5	5.783	12
433	Burt Labelle	4	4.333	10
433	Peter Rosamilia	3	3.900	9
425	Ron Kelly	6	10.633	25
400	Rick Brooks	3	3.200	8
357	Arnold Vagts	1	2.500	7
353	Jeff Power	4	4.583	13
333	Bruce Kindig	2	2.667	8
325	Eric Verheiden	2	4.550	14
323	Elliot Lipson	2	2.583	8
320	John Smythe	8	8.333	26

The number listed under "Points" is the Calhamer point count where only wins and draws are tabulated: Winners receive 1 point; in a draw, the point is divided among the surviving players. The "Averaged Score" is computed by dividing the number of "Points" by the number of "Games Rated," omitting decimals. To insure a meaningful statistical sample, a minimum of seven "Games Rated" is required.

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NUMBERSIXINASERIESOHWELLHOWISWALKERGOINGTOCOMPLAINTHISIMEIWONDERWELLIWONTKNOW

THIS GUY CAN'T MAKE UP HIS MIND

Since I published my spell tables for D&D magic users in TMG#39, I've gotten some flack about it, particularly from Bruce Schlickbernd in his analysis of various tables in Poictesme # 21.

I am therefore shifting to a spell table similar to one Greg Costikyan uses, which will probably be adapted later. What it basically does is give a magician a certain number of spell points (his level times his intelligence), and then assigns values to spells as to how many points it takes to throw them. Minimum number of points needed for a spell is 9 for read magic and a maximum of 18(for sleeping 16 first-level monsters: 10+ $\frac{1}{2}$ xbeings slept) on the first level. This is nice because it establishes a usefulness for a high intelligence for the magic-user on the battlefield, as a high strength is good for a fighter and high dexterity is good for the thief. Complain about that, Bruce!

A full listing of spell values should be worked out as soon as I get Costikyan's FIRE THE ARQUEBUSSIERS to compare his tables with my projected ones.



ANALYSES- 1974 GE

PETER BERGGREN (FRANCE): If my memory (and my files) serve me correctly, this was the game where I formed an alliance with England, while talking Germany into making the right moves for us. I figured Russia, England and I in cooperation could take Germany out in three years max. We planned on suckering Germany into Sweden while slipping into Denmark from behind, crushing his defensive position. But Russia, who had promised me "total secrecy", tipped Germany off and that was that. England was faltering and a R-G alliance seemed inevitable. Oops.

But then Germany wanted to reform the alliance between us! I jumped at the chance, and we began marching. Just as Germany was about to put the crowning touch on Russia, the trouble began. Germany was played by four players in less than two gameyears, before someone reliable came along: Ron Kelly. A brilliant tactician, but not brilliant enough to salvage a position that was then down to two centers.

Very weak play by Austria let Turkey go down the tubes to the Italian-Russian alliance and only my attack on Italy saved Austria from the same fate. Further weak play by Austria led to Russia absorbing everything in sight for a victory. But, had the one-center puppet Italy gone with me, things would have been very different. Having to fight Italy as well as Russia made our position intolerable, and only several risky moves could salvage the game. This was impossible against Russia. He must be one of the best (luckiest?) tacticians I've ever seen. If he had known my moves he could have done no better. Congratulations, Dave, I hope I meet you again sometime.

DAVID HERTZ (RUSSIA, VICTOR): Startling strategy, constant backstabbing vicious rumormongering and threatmaking were not the tools I used to win. Rather I used alliance diplomacy in the south and missed moves by Germany in the North to take advantage of the fact that no one seemed to be causing things to happen.

In the south Italy and I got Turkey and Austria hostile and then eliminated Turkey. Italy and I remained allied until he proved unable to stop the French invasion, at which time I stabbed in order to stem it myself. That Austria-Hungary remained stable through all this reflects a conservative attitude which kept him almost totally defensive throughout the game. That was all right with me because I had to worry about Germany who stabbed me in 1903. I was determined at all costs to repel the invasion before it reached home and, with the help of two missed moves by Germany, I turned the attack back on itself. Eventually I took Germany; then won with London.

All I can say about the one opponent who also did respectably, Peter Berggren, is that, while his diplomacy was excellent in that he was never recognized by any as the immediate enemy, he expanded a year or so behind me. Still, he could have saved it with sharp play at the end, but he blew it so — whine away!

GAMESMASTER (RBL): Another example of Russia needing a blitzkrieg to win the game and that France grows in Russia's wake. Peter made a mistake at the end in repeating his lack of covering of London, which Hertz noticed and took advantage of to slip in a fleet for the victory. It's generally a good idea, when covering a vulnerable area without a surety of maintaining a hold, to avoid repetition. Well, maybe next time Peter will know better.

URFDURFALANDDNYMPANEWSLETTERARRIVEDACUPLEOFDAYSSAGOIGNOREWHATISAIDBEFOREABOUT

Avoid the Vox recording of Prokofieff's PETER AND THE WOLF and Britten's YOUNG PERSON'S GUIDE TO THE ORCHESTRA (STPL 59280), as Brandon de Wilde's narration makes the two works incredibly slow-moving. And they're such inherently beautiful pieces too.



# THE GAMES

Friday: checking at the Post Office, the postmaster said the Canadian strike has ended according to one source, but he has received neither official notification nor any mail from Canada. I'll check again tomorrow morn. In the meantime, the games with no moves herein are delayed. At least until I contact the pertinent players. Note my temporary COA, and that the deadline for the next sets of moves is noon, Friday, 2 January 1976. Meanwhile I'll roll for smoky dragons in this issue, once: 80/81. No smoky dragons. Check the back page to see if there's one lurking about you.

ON THE POOR FOLK SHAT THE RICH FOLKS AND THE RICH FOLK SHAT THE POOR FOLKS ALL OF MY FOLK SHATE ALL

1973 CQf

PEACE REIGNS... IN THE WEST

FALL 1911

## FRANCE:

A Yor-Lon  
F Nrg H  
F Nth-Eng  
F Edi H  
F Wes-Mid  
F Ion-Aeg  
F Gre S F Ion-Aeg  
F Tun-Ion  
F Alb S F Gre  
A Ser S GERMAN A Rum-Bul  
A Tri S A Tyr  
A Tyr S A Tri  
A Bel-Pic  
A Pic-Par  
A Bur H

## GERMANY

A Rum-Bul  
A Gal-Rum  
A Bud S A Gal-Rum  
A Sev H  
A Ukr S A Sev  
A Vie S A Bud  
F Kie-Hol  
F Hel S F Kie-Hol  
F Nwy H  
F Ska S F Nwy  
A Ber, A Mun, F St.P(sc) all H

## TURKEY:

F Eas S F Aeg  
F Aeg S F Bul  
F Bla S A Bul  
A Bul, A Arm both H

Turkey has lost Greece to France and Sevastopol to Germany, giving France 16 centers, Germany fourteen and Turkey 4. France and Germany each have one build and Turkey one removal. By the by, the player who missed moves for Turkey was Adam Gilinsky. He has been replaced. (Ve haf vays'uff dealing it...)

BERLIN-PARIS: The building of a fleet in Kiel recently had no significance. I had no deceiving motive building a fleet instead of an army-- just an added precaution. I do see how you could misinterpret it, though. Since you can see I made no aggressive moves against you last time, I do hope you will pull back. However, I am taking the precaution of moving into Holland. That's my only move in the north and, believe me, it's non-aggressive.

PARIS-BERLIN: I pulled back. Sorry. I still want to go through with the two-way draw.

WOODMERE(IDUNNO): You two would leave me with space fit for a spacefiller, and a large one, too.

IDPUTDOWNSOME OF THE LYRICSTODER BETTELSTUDENT BUT ITS SING GERMAN AND I CANT WRITE IN THAT LANG

1974 IJ

EDINBURGH DOCKS BUSY AGAIN

WINTER 1905

Last issue I neglected to note that Russia picked up Trieste. He therefore has 13 centers and three builds:

NETRIA(Tonper):

Has A War

FRANCE(Ferkin Doyle):NMR:A Mun ann.

Has F NAT,F Cly,F Wal, F Eng, A Bel,  
A Hol.

ITALY(John Hendry):A Tri retreats-Ven;

Builds F Rom.

Has F Rom,A Ven, F Ion, F Nap

TURKEY(Michael Friedman):

has A Con, A Ser,A Bul,F Alb,F Aeg

ENGLAND(Thomas):

Annihilates F Hol. Builds F Edi

Has F Edi, F Lon

GERMANY(Dennis Klein): Removes F Yor

Has A Kie

RUSSIA(Matthew Diller):

Builds A War, A Mos, F St.P(nc)

Has F St.P(nc),F Bla, F Nwy, F Nth, F

Nrg,A War, A Mos,A VieA Tyr,A Ber,A

Den,A Mun,A Tri

temporary COA: Dennis Klein, from about now to Jan.2: 235 Gentry Street,  
Park Forest, Ill. 60466. Pay attention to my COA. See you in six weeks. Will  
Ron Kelly, Room. 120, 225 Virginia Ave.SE, Washington,DC 20061 standby for  
France?

ILLTRYTOGETACOPYOFSLOBINPOLITZHUENAL#42TOYOUNEXTWEEKENDJEREMYSOSTOPBITCHINGABOUT

1974 GD

FRENCH ARMIES REOCCUPY

WINTER 1908-SPRING 1909

AUSTRIA(Paul Thomas);

B A Vie;

F Tyr-Wes

F Rom-Tyr

A Tus-Pie

A Bud-Tri

A Vie S A Bud-Tri

A Bul H

A Tyr-Ven

A Boh-Mun

A Mun-Kie

A Sil-Ber

A Mar-Gas

A Sev S RUSSIAN A Mos

A Ukr & A Gal S RUSSIAN A War

ENGLAND(Ferkin)NMR

Has F Por,F Bre,F Eng,F Bal,A St.P,

A Livonia, A Ber, A Pic

F Kie retreats- Hel,Den or is ann.

FRANCE(Ed Hollshwandner):

Removes F Tun;

F Lyo-Mar

A Ruh-Kie

A-Hol S A Ruh-Kie

A Bur-Pic

ITALY(Dennis Klein):

F Tri-Ven(retreats-Alb,Adr,ann.)

RUSSIA(Alan Carlson):

A Mos S A War

A War S A Mos

Last issue I failed to underline the English move into Belgium, which was  
stood off by the French. England thus had only two builds and France only one  
removal. Will Eric Verheiden, CALTECH 1-86, Pasadena, Ca. 91126 please standby  
for England? Note Dennis Klein's COA above and mine below.

THE MIXMAXU GAZETTE

556 Green Place

Woodmere,N.Y.11398

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